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~~Ex Parte~~ EX PARTE 02-55
LST Docket

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1803

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

ORIGINAL

May 12, 2004

RECEIVED

JUL - 2 2004

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Ms. Diane Atkinson
Congressional Liaison Specialist
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW, Room 8-C453
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Ms. Atkinson:

I have been sent a copy of a letter from the New Orleans Fire Fighters Association regarding a "Consensus Plan" currently before the Federal Communications Commission.

Please give the views and concerns of the New Orleans Fire Fighters Association every appropriate consideration within federal guidelines. If there is any appropriate information you may provide that responds to its enclosed letter, it would be greatly appreciated. Your reply may be forwarded to the attention of Patrick McConnell in my Washington office.

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Sincerely,



JOHN BREAUX
United States Senator

26 MAY 2004 RCUD

JB/cpm
Enclosure

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NEW ORLEANS FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

LOCAL 632

International Association of Fire Fighters

Louisiana AFL-CIO

Greater New Orleans, AFL-CIO

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February 10, 2004

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Support for the Consensus Plan for 800 MHz Realignment
Ex Parte, WT Docket No. 02-55

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The New Orleans Fire Fighters Association members operates an 800 MHz trunked radio system providing critical public safety communications for fire and emergency personnel. We are actively following this vital proceeding for public safety and request that our views be considered.

First responders in Louisiana and across the nation are increasingly at risk because their public safety radio communications are vulnerable to interference from cellular phones. As cellular usage increases, the risk of garbled or blocked police, fire and other public safety communications increases. First responders also urgently need more 800 MHz spectrum to have "interoperable" communications among police and firefighters and among neighboring jurisdictions. Fortunately, a solution is available.

The Federal Communications Commission has before it a "Consensus Plan" that would address cellular/public safety radio interference problems and provide more of the spectrum that first responders urgently need for radio communications. We support the Consensus Plan along with the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International, Inc.; the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Inc. and International Municipal Signal Association; the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the



Major Cities Chiefs Association; the Major County Sheriffs' Association; and the National Sheriffs' Association. The FCC must adopt the Consensus Plan expeditiously in its public safety spectrum rulemaking, WT Docket No. 02-55.

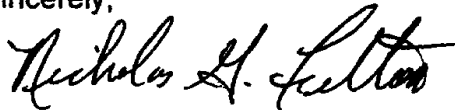
The Consensus Plan offers the only real, near-term solution to existing public safety radio problems. The Plan provides a comprehensive solution that addresses interference to public safety systems, allocates additional spectrum for public safety needs, provides private funding to compensate licensees that may need to relocate to new channels as the result of the Plan, and ensures that all affected licensees receive equivalent replacement spectrum as part of the spectrum swaps called for by the Consensus Plan.

Other proposals that have been made to the FCC fall far short and must be rejected. The UTC/cellular "plan" ignores the problems faced by public safety communicators and suggests that case-by-case, after-the-fact solutions could be found once interference manifests itself. Responding only after-the-fact to the problems affecting time-critical public safety services is not acceptable, since a single interference incident can jeopardize the lives of emergency personnel and the citizens they serve.

Section 1 of the Communications Act of 1934, provides that the FCC is to "promote safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communication." The Consensus Plan would greatly advance this vital objective. It has been over sixteen months since the FCC began its public safety spectrum proceeding and over one year since the Consensus Plan was submitted. Supporters of the Consensus Plan have recently addressed the remaining implementation details associated with the Plan. There is no reason for the FCC to postpone action any further.

We urge the FCC to resolve the issues facing the public safety community expeditiously and adopt in full the terms of the Consensus Plan.

Sincerely,



Nicholas G. Felton, Jr.
President

cc Senator John Breaux
 Senator Mary Landrieu
 Representative Rodney Alexander
 Representative Richard Baker
 Representative William Jefferson
 Representative Christopher John
 Representative James McCrery
 Representative W. J. "Billy" Tauzin
 Representative David Vitter